

**REMARKS:**

In the outstanding Office Action, claims 1-4, 9-12 and 17-19 are rejected, and claims 5-8 and 13-16 are objected to. Claims 1-4, 9-12 and 17-19 have been amended for clarification, and claim 20 has been added. Thus, in view of the forgoing, claims 1-20 remain pending for which reconsideration is requested. No new matter has been added. The Examiner's rejections are traversed below.

**OBJECTION TO CLAIMS:**

At page 4 of the outstanding Office Action, the Examiner stated that claims 5-8 and 13-16 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, and would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. The rejection of the independent claims upon which claims 5-8 and 13-16 depend is traversed below.

Thus, it is respectfully requested that the objection to claims 5-8 and 13-16 be withdrawn.

**REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. §102(b):**

Claims 1-4, 9-12 and 17-19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,712,964 ('964). The rejection is traversed and reconsideration is requested.

'964 discusses a computer graphics (CG) data display device for displaying an object in a virtual world in a realistic and dynamic form.

The present application discloses an image processing method and apparatus that hierarchically links objects having a pair of image data and image attribute information including image format data representative of an image.

The Examiner compares the '964 device for realistically displaying objects in a virtual world with the present invention. According to the '964 system, an object information memory unit stores form data of an object, position information and other physical information for each object in a virtual world (see, column 11, lines 46-48). Each object in the virtual world can inherit a surface attribute and a position by being provided with its parent object or child object (see, column 32, lines 18-30 of '964) according to a moving object list that describes objects that are moving or changing (see, column 32, lines 31-34 of '964) so that a realistic view can be created for a user who is walking in the virtual world (see, column 16, lines 64-66 of '964). This means that the '964 device is directed to displaying an object at a specified time when a movement or change occurs in relation to the object by adjusting attribute of the object based on the

movement of change (see, column 30, lines 36-57 of '964).

As recited in amended independent claims 1-4 and 9-12, the image processing apparatus and method of the present invention includes, "... deriving image attribute information representative of the attribute of the image for linking the plurality of objects" where the derived attribute information includes "image format data representative of the image". When new objects having a parent object are produced, the present invention sets up "image attribute information including the image format data" of the parent object on the new objects (see, amended claims 1, 4, 9 and 17). Similarly, as recited in amended independent claims 2 and 10, the present invention includes, "... causes image attribute information including the image format data altered" to be reflected in the descendant object. The '964 device does not teach or suggest, deriving image "attribute information including image data representative of the image" as recited in each of the independent claims 1-4, 9-12, 17 and 19 for applying the attribute information including the image format data to hierarchically lower objects. Instead, the '964 device is directed to displaying characteristics of a movement change of an object in a virtual world such as, contacts of an object with another object in the virtual world (see, column 18, lines 6-19 of '964).

The Applicants respectfully assert that each and every element as set forth in the independent claims 1-4, 9-12, 17 and 19 is not described in the '964 reference as required by MPEP §2131.

It is submitted that the independent claims are patentable over '964.

For at least the above-mentioned reasons, dependent claim 18 depending from independent claim 17 is patentably distinguishable over '964. As recited in claim 18, the image processing method of the present invention includes, "reflecting altered image attribute information including the image format data of the parent object in image attribute information of a descendant object when the parent object is altered." The '964 method does not teach or suggest providing "reflecting altered image attribute information including the image format data of the parent object", as recited in dependent claim 18.

Therefore, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

**NEW CLAIM:**

New claim 20 has been added to emphasize that an image processing apparatus of the present invention includes, "deriving image attribute information representative of the attribute of the image for linking a plurality of objects... including image format data representative of the

image" where "the plurality of objects of the image and the image attribute information including the image format data are linked in form of a hierarchy structure including parentage" for producing objects "based on image attribute information including the image format data stored".

This provides an efficient method for image processing by linking a plurality of objects in a hierarchy structure and producing objects based on the stored "image attribute information including the image format data stored".

It is respectfully asserted that the cited reference does not teach or suggest the features recited in new claim 20.

**CONCLUSION:**

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.


Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: 11/17/14

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